



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Carter M. Stewart
Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MAY, 12, 2010
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ohs>

CONTACT: Fred Alverson
614-469-5715

RICHLAND COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ENTICING MINOR

Faces minimum sentence of ten years

COLUMBUS – John H. Szewczyk, 28, of Lexington, Ohio pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of coercion and enticement for using the Internet to try and persuade a girl under the age of 18 to engage in sexual activity.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and members of the Franklin County Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force announced the plea entered today before Senior United States District Judge George C. Smith.

According to a statement of facts presented during the plea hearing, Szewczyk sent an instant message to an undercover online investigator on January 10, 2010, thinking the investigator was a 38-year old woman and her 15-year old daughter. During the course of the online conversation, Szewczyk said he was on probation for being convicted of unlawful sexual conduct with a minor. Plans were made for Szewczyk to meet the juvenile at her house.

When he arrived at the Westerville house where he thought the girl lived, task force officers approached him and searched him. They found that he was carrying condoms and a Lady Gaga "Fame Monster" compact disc. A federal complaint was filed against Szewczyk on February 4, 2010. He has been in custody since then.

The penalty for coercion and enticement is at least ten years and up to life imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. He can also be placed under court supervision following his imprisonment for a term of at least five years and up to life.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov.

Agencies participating in the Franklin County Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, led by Franklin County Sheriff Jim Karnes' office, include the police departments from Westerville, Upper Arlington and Columbus.

Stewart commended the task force officers who investigated the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Hunter, who is prosecuting the case.

#